

MASS. G67.8: W085/R29



REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS  
COLLECTION

WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN IN STATE EMPLOYMENT

NOV 12 1985

University of Massachusetts  
Depository Copy

1. Introduction

Over the past ten years, women have entered the work force in greater numbers than ever before in history. According to a 1984 survey conducted by American Demographics, 62.5% of all working-age women in America are employed full or part time .

Yet, despite greater numbers in the work force, women continue to be concentrated in traditionally female, low paying occupations. In 1981, 70% of working women were in low paying jobs, comprising 98% of the nation's secretaries, 94% of the typists, and 94% of household workers.

The composition of the Commonwealth's workforce reflects the larger reality. While 47% of the Commonwealth's employees are female, it is no surprise that there is a disproportionate representation of women in the lower-paying positions. For example, 89% of all office and clerical personnel are female.

Working women's lives are made difficult not only by lack of opportunity and mobility, but also by the dual pressures placed upon them as workers and mothers. Most employers have yet to recognize the need for a more flexible environment for working parents.

As the Commonwealth's largest employer, Governor Michael S. Dukakis feels that it is incumbent upon the state to set an example and to work toward becoming a model employer of women.



Already the Governor has taken a leadership role in improving conditions for working women. The number of women in top administrative positions increased 34% in 1984 according to the State Office of Affirmative Action Annual Report. An Aggressive plan to achieve pay equity has been initiated. And a comprehensive day plan, which includes provisions for state employees, has been developed. However, the Governor is interested in exploring further methods of improving career opportunities and working conditions for women.

(in this paragraph insert a few DPH accomplishments)

Therefore, the Governor appointed the Working Group on Women In State Employment in February 1984 to evaluate policies and programs which impact on women state employees. The group represented women from a variety of positions, levels and agencies throughout state government. The task of the group was to develop recommendations for Governor Michael S. Dukakis on career development and the working parent.

In order to obtain input from women state employees, the working group sponsored a public forum in Boston on June 7, 1984. Governor and Mrs. Dukakis attended. Over 500 women attended, 16 had the opportunity to testify, 20 were interested but could not testify due to time constraints, and over 20 submitted written testimony. In addition, a forum was held in Springfield on August 8. There was an equally enthusiastic response.



The central themes of the event were:

1. A concern for increased promotions from within rather than hiring from the outside. This was the most frequently stated and strongly felt issue, for long term, lower to mid-level clerical and secretarial employees.
2. Day Care and other issues concerning the working parent, including more flexible maternity leave, paternity leave, and options such as flexible working hours, job sharing and flexible benefits.

While the administration must be credited with taking steps to respond to the burgeoning needs resulting from the significant entry of women into the work force, much remains to be done. Following are the recommendations developed by the Working Group on Women and State Employment. Some of these proposals can be implemented administratively by the appropriate state agency. Many of them, however, are subject to the collective bargaining process. The Working Group recognizes that the unions are the official representatives of employees and will need to weigh these proposals against other concerns at the bargaining table.

## II. Career Development

### A. Problem Statement

Testimony at the public forum focused particularly on the





practice of hiring from the outside rather than promoting from within. Women spoke of the frustration of working for years in a clerical or secretarial position, while watching others from the outside gain positions for which they felt they were qualified.

From the testimony, there seems to be a particular barrier between the clerical/administrative levels and professional jobs. Occupants of the administrative jobs may have the practical knowledge, but lack the credentials. The converse may be true of applicants from the outside. The result is that occupational segregation continues.

Accompanying the problem of lack of mobility was the problem of lack of information about job openings. Despite contract provisions and policies to the contrary, women complained that jobs often were not posted, and that the length of time and place of posting were often unclear and arbitrary. People also complained about the lack of information regarding career paths and job openings in other agencies. A frequent comment was that while there was interest in advancement there was no information about the kinds of opportunities a current position might lead to.

The Working Group supports the practice of promotion from within. However, the group also recognizes that at times it is important to hire from the outside in order to increase representation of previously unrepresented groups.





The Department of Personnel Administration should be commended for initiatives it has undertaken to increase career mobility. Specifically the DPA is currently developing a computerized talent bank to be available to all state agencies seeking to fill vacant positions.

However, additional solutions are necessary to address these problems. The first and most important focuses around greater access to information; the second around career ladders; and the third around training programs.

B. Recommendations

1. That the Executive Office of Administration and Finance require each agency to post all existing procedures for hiring and promotions, including the location and duration of job posting. The intent of this recommendation is to educate employees about procedures, reduce arbitrariness and create greater accountability on the part of managers.
2. Most state bargaining contracts provide for career ladder committees. While many of these committees have been very successful at providing career direction for their members, others have been less active. We recommend that the Office of Employee Relations encourage those unions with inactive career ladder committees to revive operations of these committees as soon as possible.
3. That following internal posting for the period required by collective bargaining agreements, agencies be encouraged to forward unfilled positions to the Department of Personnel Administration's "Job Bank" to be posted in a



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2013

<http://archive.org/details/reportrecommenda00mass>

designated day for a designated period of time.

4. In order to facilitate the optimal and lasting employment of women in the state system, we recommend that DPA establish a model, pilot career counseling program. The development of such a program should include an analysis of promotional practices with specific recommendations for remedy. Components of the program could include a drop-in center, an information and resource library, job listings, career counseling, job fairs, a role model series, a mentor program, and promotion of civil service exams. After the pilot has been developed, the program could be carried out by personnel departments in agencies throughout the Commonwealth. The Working Group recognizes that the DPA would need appropriate resources to develop this pilot.
5. That the Department of Personnel Administration conduct an assessment of the training programs available and the participation rates of women of color for the purpose of making recommendations for new or additional training and for new and additional recruitment techniques. The strong sense from the hearings was that while excellent training opportunities exist for managers, little is available to women in the clerical ranks. This report should be prepared in cooperation with the Governor's Advisor on Women's Issues and be submitted to the Secretary of Administration and Finance no later than September 1, 1985.





### III. The Working Mother

#### A. Flexible Work Options

##### Problem Statement ,

Alternative work options have been available for employees of the Commonwealth for several years, however, the vast majority of employees and applicants are unaware of them. The work group endorses the effort currently underway by DPA to disseminate information on alternative work options and encourages state agencies to make better use of them for both current and future employees. Alternative work options should include: Flextime, staggered work hours, part-time employment with benefits, jo sharing, intermittent and seasonal employment.

Such options are particularly desirable to working parents who require increased flexibility in the workplace to accomodate childrearing. In a recent study entitled: "It Works: Part-Time Employment in State Agencies", it is stated that, "No single characteristic of a job makes it impossible to do on a part-time basis." If a supervisor believes a position requires 40 hours of work per week, job sharing between two people (sharing the salary and the benefits of a full-time position) might be feasible.

At the public forum sponsored by the working group, two women who job share in the Executive Office of Consumer Affairs, discussed the benefits of the arrangement in combining careers with childrearing. While the education of managers on flex-time has occured, job-sharing needs a marketing program.





B. Recommendations

1. That the Department of Personnel Administration, in conjunction with the Governor's Office on Women's Issues, introduce an ammendment to Chapter 31, Section 33 of the Massachusetts General Law. The law currently says, "Regardless of actual length of service, permanent employees appointed on less than a full-time basis shall, for purposes of determining seniority, rank below all full-time permanent employees." This means a part-time employee after 20 years of service could have less seniority than a new employee. Needless to say, this discourages participation in part-time and job-sharing programs. We also recommend that the OER review this proposal for provisional employees.
2. Since part-time employees are currently paid only for holidays which fall on those days when they would normally work, we propose that part-time employees be paid for holidays based upon the percentage of time worked per week. Accordingly we recommend that the Office of Employee Relations review this proposal for consideration during the next round of collective bargaining with employees unions.
3. We propose that the Department of Personnel Administration market job sharing as an option to agency managers, and encourage agancy managers to allow employees to participate in such programs.



#### IV. Flexible Benefits Plan

##### A. Problem Statement

Today only 20% of employees are married with a non-working spouse at home. Yet, most fixed benefit plans were designed to meet the needs of this "traditional" family.

For example, one member of the Working Group on Women in State Employment is married with two children. Her husband receives full family health benefits, which they take advantage of. She is also eligible for full family health coverage through her job. She uses that benefit because she has no options and because it allows her to see a doctor she would not otherwise be able to see. However, given the choice, she would apply the money the state is spending for her health care to her child care costs, which are over \$100 per week. The state is spending money inefficiently on this employee, while her needs are not being met.

Flexible benefit plans (or "Cafeteria Style" plans) enable employees to design individual plans which meet their needs. Testifier after testifier at the public hearing spoke of the difficulty in paying for child care. Flexible benefits is one option for addressing this problem.

Although Flexible Benefit Plans differ, most build on "core-benefits" which all employees must take, adding optional benefits which employees "buy" with benefit credits. Core benefits are likely to include basic medical, and life in-





surance, vacation and sick time, and a retirement plan. Optional benefits might include dental care, legal insurance, child care, additional vacation or sick time. Credits are determined by seniority, position and salary. Flexible benefits can be used by employees for a variety of reasons. This group is particularly interested in flexible benefits as a means of addressing the child care problem.

#### B. Recommendations

We recommend that over the next year the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, the Office of Employee Relations and the Governor's Advisor on Women's Issues in cooperation with the unions, evaluate the feasibility and desirability of flexible benefits. The working group recommends that the Executive Office of Administration and Finance prepare a report, with recommendations to the Governor, by December 31, 1985. Steps to be taken in the process of this evaluation include: a survey of employees' needs to determine the range of options which could be offered, cost impact, and a plan for administration.

### V. Child Care

#### A. Problem Statement

In addition to the problem of paying for child care, a large portion of the testifiers spoke of the difficulties in finding quality child care. Many spoke of their preference for having their children near them during the day



at a child care center in their workplace.

One woman spoke of the Commonwealth Child Care Corporation, a non-profit, parent-run center located in the McCormack Building in Boston. This mother described the pleasure she derives from traveling into work with her children and spending her lunch hours with them.

The desire for on-site day care was mentioned for two reasons. First, some parents prefer to be near their children during the day. Second, given the shortage of available child care, parents are looking to their employers to participate in increasing the supply.

B. Recommendations

In March of 1984 Governor Michael S. Dukakis created the Governor's Day Care Partnership Project and charged its members with developing recommendations designed to increase the supply of quality, affordable child care. The Project reported to the Governor in December and the Governor announced his day care plan on January 22. A major segment of the Project's work focused on addressing the issue of the state as a model employer. The working group supports that section of the Project's recommendations which deal with day care for state employees. Those include:

1. Creation of a non-profit umbrella corporation to assist in the development of child care centers.
2. Start-up funds for 3-5 centers
3. The Department of Personnel Administration



help organize and work with the non-profit umbrella corporation, develop informational materials for state employees on day care options and work with personnel officers to disseminate this information. In addition, it will work with each state agency in developing and implementing a child care needs assessment.

## VI. Maternity/Paternity Leave

### A. Problem Statement

Many women spoke to what they felt to be inadequate parental leave policies. While the Commonwealth's maternity leave policy corresponds to the 8 weeks unpaid leave required by the law, many felt that this simply was not enough time to recover from childbirth and develop a bond with a child. Some also spoke for the need for equal time for fathers who wish to participate in the upbringing of their children.

As women continue to enter the workforce in record numbers, and as they attempt to combine work with child-rearing, the Commonwealth needs to demonstrate an understanding of their needs as both employees and parents.

### B. Recommendations

That the Office of Employee Relations in conjunction with





employee unions explore ways to extend the length of and make comparable maternity, paternity, and adoptive leaves beyond current contractual provisions for such leaves of absence, during future contract negotiations.

### Conclusion

The recommendations in this report are the beginning of a process rather than the end. Each of the steps recommended here must be examined by the appropriate agency heads and implemented within those agencies. The success of these recommendations will depend on continued cooperation between agency heads and the working group, as well as on continued communication with the women who came forward at the public forums. For this reason we recommend the reformation of an ongoing working group of women in state employment. All of the issues brought forward at public forums cannot be solved overnight. But through effort and cooperation we can continue to make important progress.

